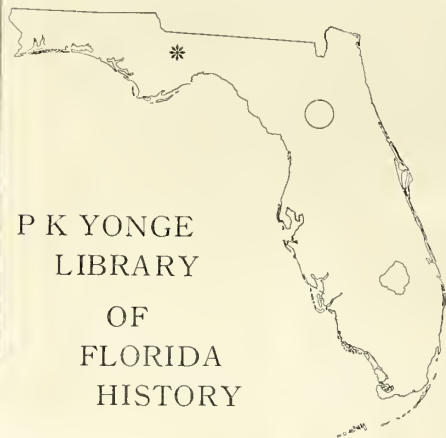




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# GULF INTRA-WATERWAY

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## GULF INTRA-WATERWAY

THE APALACHICOLA RIVER. This stream is formed by the junction of the FLINT and CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERS that rise in Georgia. Its entire length is 98 miles from the junction to where it flows into Apalachicola Bay. Narrow in spots, yet it branches out into lagoons in some instances a mile wide, and traverses a region much frequented by sportsmen who enjoy the hunting and fishing in this area.

From earliest historical times, long before it became the dividing line between East and West Florida, the river has been known as a waterway that served many miles of interior country. The old Creek Nation Indians of the upper country believed the stream and its tributaries flowed into the "Land Beyond."

Runaway bands of the original Creeks were called SEMINOLES, and, finding the river with its wooded banks, its numerous oyster beds and a plentiful supply of fish to their liking, settled in contentment near the shores of the stream and the Gulf.

The number of aboriginal mounds near the mouth of the river, and stretching along the Gulf shore in both directions, show that there were tribes of Indians living in this area along a natural harbor, bays and series of islands.

Both shores of the river contain heavy stands of oak, magnolia, maple, hickory and other hardwoods. Farther back into the country are enormous stands of long leaf and slash pine, while up the river a few miles above BLOUNTSTOWN is the only stand in Florida of the rare Torreya tree, also known as Stinking Cedar and Gopher wood, and thought to be the same as the Cedars of Lebanon mentioned in the Bible, used by Noah in building the Ark.

Owing to its sloping banks, subject to overflow during the spring freshets from January to June, there are no settlements along the river edge, the city of Apalachicola being the most important at the lower end while River Junction occupies a similar position on the other end, near the Georgia State line. There are, however, numerous landings and small piers and in some cases more slides built of timbers, used to load barrels of turpentine and rosin aboard the small river packets. A few sawmills with logbooms can be seen along the shores. The products of the forest, including railroad ties, are loaded at the landings and taken down river to Apalachicola to be transported by larger vessels and railroads to other parts of the country.

While at ordinary river stages a depth of six feet is available, the spring tides add much more water to the stream, and boats with more than sixfoot draft have been known to make the 100 mile trip



up the river. How high the water rises during the months from January to June can be seen along the river banks where "hightide" marks in some places show as much as 12 feet above the natural banks. The river is tidal for only 25 miles above its mouth and the current is principally ebb.

The Apalachicola Northern railroad bridge crosses the stream about 4.5 miles above the mouth and another crosses one mile south of US 90, approximately 96 miles north of Apalachicola.

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway follows the Apalachicola River for approximately five miles from its mouth where it joins the Jackson River and in this portion of the route the controlling depth is nine feet. North of the junction the Apalachicola has a dredged channel 100 feet wide and six feet deep to the Georgia State line.

Having come westward through St. George Sound and negotiated the US 319 highway bridge, the city of Apalachicola is seen on the left. It is the county seat of Franklin County and in 1930 had a population of 3,143 persons of whom 65% were white and 35% colored. The 1935 census shows that this figure had increased to 3,730, being divided into 2,224 white and 1,506 colored.

Fishing is the chief industry of the city, oysters, shrimp, mullet, snappers and other seafood bringing in one million dollars annually. Naval stores, lumber, crushed oyster shell and tupelo honey transactions amount to another \$700,000 each year. In addition, pulpwood in recent years has been adding many more thousands of dollars to the above income. There is a small amount of sponge gathering by Greek and Italian spongers carried on off Dog Island, south of the Bay, and brought to the city for reshipment to Tarpon Springs to be marketed there.

Apalachicola has adequate transportation by water, rail, and bus. River steamers make regular trips, carrying freight and passengers, connecting by way of the Sound and the Gulf with Panama City, Pensacola, and Mobile. The Apalachicola Northern railroad connects at River Junction with three trunk lines, and bus lines to Port St. Joe connect with lines reaching all points in Georgia and Alabama. Other busses to Tallahassee give frequent connections with points east and west.

Hotel accommodations, restaurants featuring seafood in all styles, good stores and entertainment of many kinds are available and several interesting places can be visited. Sport fishing, of course, is the main year-round attraction. Bathing at the various beaches is unexcelled for there is no swift dangerous undertow in the bay or Gulf waters.





There are dozens of Indian mounds in the vicinity, near the city, on the bay and on St. George Sound. Some have been explored by scientists of the Smithsonian Institute and relics of aboriginal inhabitants have been recovered. Other mounds, overgrown with trees and vegetation still await the shovel and riddle of the archaeologist. A list of these mounds and the various relics recovered is contained in a book written by C. B. Moore, eminent archaeologist. The title is Certain Aboriginal Mounds of the North West Florida Coast; this volume may be found in the larger libraries. The Smithsonian Institute for a number of years had a steamboat named Gopher stationed near Apalachicola for the exploration of these mounds and the relics recovered can be seen in the Institute museum in Washington D. C.

An Indian canoe more than 50 feet long and made from one huge cypress log was in recent years brought to the surface by lumbermen who were salvaging sunken sawmill logs. The canoe showed the usual expert workmanship, considering the crude tools used by the builders. Although extremely narrow compared with its length, the craft was found exceedingly seaworthy on the water. This canoe is now in the museum at Gainesville, Florida where it is exhibited.

Seafood packing houses where oysters and shrimp are canned can be visited. Here the entire process, from the time the boats arrive with their hauls of these sea delicacies, until the final sealing of the cans, can be watched. In other plants the raw shrimp, after a beheading process, the oysters in the shell, the mullet, and snappers can be seen packed in barrels with plenty of crushed ice and then rushed to the express and railroad terminals to be shipped to northern markets.

In addition to the seafood packing plants, the visitor can go to the large factory where the lumber for cigar boxes is produced. Several kinds of hardwoods that have been rafted down the river can be seen coming up out of the water, sawed into short lengths and then fed into slicing machines or huge "gangsaws" that quickly convert ordinary logs into thin slabs or slats, varying from one-eighth to three-eighths inch in thickness. Other machines dress down the sides to required dimensions to be followed by planers to remove all roughness. These thin boards are then packed in bundles and shipped to cigar box factories located in or near cigar manufacturing centers in all parts of the south. It is interesting to watch a plain log of wood turned into "cigar box shooks."

At the mouth of the river is the site of a fort built in 1705 by the Spaniards. This was destroyed by Alibanan Indians and in 1719 a new fort was erected on the same spot. In the course of time this old fort was demolished and no trace of it remains today.



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In 1527 Panfilo de Narvaez, after his illfated expedition, built crude boats in or near Apalachicola in an attempt to return to Mexico. (See History). In 1819 General Andrew Jackson established headquarters for a division of his army in Apalachicola while waiting for the transfer of West Florida from Spain to the United States. This actual transfer however did not occur until 1821.

Plantations up and down the river were specializing in the growing of cotton. There were no railroads in those days so the natural thing to do was to ship by water. Small sailing boats and pole-propelled barges were soon crowding the river and the mouth of the Apalachicola was selected as a concentration point. This brought about the building of a small town called Cottontown and records show that Collector Jenkins was in charge of the Custom House of this port in 1824. Three years later in (1827) the town was incorporated as West Point with David L. White, Charles S. Masters, Benjamin J. Buehl, and Martin Brooks appointed trustees. In 1832 a post office was established, Dr. John Gorrie, the inventor of artificial ice becoming its second post master. The commercial Bank of Florida was incorporated with a half million dollars capital in 1833 and Dinsmore Westcott started publishing the Advertiser in the same year.

In 1836 the city of Apalachicola was surveyed and laid out into streets as found in present days.

Owing to its importance as a shipping point, a boom in real estate was felt in the newly created city and lots in desirable locations rose in value until one sale of two lots brought \$5,600 and another transaction was 84 lots being sold for \$182,000, more than \$2,150 per lot.

The Apalachicola Gazette Co. started publishing in 1836, C. E. Bartlett being the publisher and the town was booming. So much cotton was sent to the town that warehouses could not provide the necessary storage room and it is said that bales of cotton were often piled high on the streets. The following year 58 ships cleared from Apalachicola and 80,000 bales of cotton were shipped. Two more banks, Franklin Bank of Florida, capital one million dollars, and the Marine Insurance Bank with one and one half million dollars capital were started and soon doing a rushing business. Growing by leaps and bounds, the town was incorporated as a city on February 2, 1838, and A. K. Allison, later elected Governor of the State, became the first mayor. Trinity Church, one of the oldest in the State, was framed of white pine lumber in New York and brought in a sailing vessel to Apalachicola. The population of the city at that time was 2,050.





Housing situations at that time were acute and several buildings were carefully taken down in St. Joseph, a nearby town and rebuilt in Apalachicola. Among these was the house still standing at the corner of Market and C. Streets. This house had originally been out to dimensions in New York and shipped from there to St. Joseph in 1838. During the Civil War a Federal gunboat shot a cannon ball completely through the house.

Cotton was still the principal export item and in 1843 shipments amounted to 125,000 bales.

It was in Apalachicola that Dr. John Gorrie, while experimenting to find a cure for pulmonary consumption, in 1850 discovered and patented the way to make artificial ice. He died on June 16, 1855 and is buried in Magnolia Cemetery. The Southern Ice Exchange erected a monument in his memory in Gorrie Square in the city.

A famous author, Dr. Alvan Wentworth Chapman, rests in Chestnut Cemetery after spending 50 years of his life in the city (1849-1899). A much loved practicing physician and a botanist of national fame, he wrote Flora of the Southern States, still regarded as a text book.

In 1860, the Apalachicola Chamber of Commerce, in an effort to have Congress make an appropriation to deepen the channel, stated, "We are the greatest depot of the State. We do more business than each and every portion of the State put together. This year we have done \$14,000,000 worth of business."

The city also played an important part in the Civil War, for in 1861 the fortifications were built at Apalachicola and a blockade was enforced by Federal vessels. The steamer Spray was outfitted for war by the Confederates and soon captured the U. S. Schooner William C. Atwater with 31 men aboard. Taken into Apalachicola, the boat was converted into a blockade runner only to be captured by the Federal Steamer Itasca. During the Reconstruction period, farming being at a standstill, the people returned to cutting timber and crossties, boat building and the gathering of oysters. Others became fishermen and so from a cotton shipping port the city gradually developed into what it is today---a leading fish and oyster center with lumbering and naval stores a secondary industry.

A big fire in 1900, well remembered by old timers living today, wiped out practically the entire business section of six blocks (71 buildings) with an estimated loss of a quarter million dollars. Only a small portion was covered by insurance but as in other cities, this calamity later proved to be a blessing, for new buildings took the place of burnt ruins and optimism prevailed. A municipal electric light plant was built in 1928 and the State highway was brought from Port St. Joe to the city. Free ferries across the bay from Apalachicola to East Point were inaugurated



in 1932 and the following year a loan for the John Gorrie bridge was approved June 8, 1933 at Washington, D. C. Work started on this bridge in 1934, being completed November 11, 1936.

Today Apalachicola is a thriving city, with modern business establishments, good docking facilities for river boats and yachts with good anchorage outside near the western end of Dog Island, in 20 feet of water. A relief station of the United States Health Service is maintained in the city and Custom Offices are located in the post office building.

Being an important port on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, marine supplies of all kinds are readily available along the waterfront. No charge is made for dockage and fresh water is free.

The Apalachicola River divides Gulf and Franklin Counties on its lower reaches whereas the upper stretch separates Calhoun from Liberty County. Sparsely settled, there are but few towns of any size near the river banks.

Gulf County is noted for its tupelo honey that has the distinction of never granulating. In normal years the county produces 2,000 barrels of honey worth \$50,000. Blueberries and Satsuma oranges do well here; all kinds of field crops can be grown successfully and fruit orchards are increasing.

Franklin County depends more on its naval stores and lumber industries than it does on farming, yet a decided increase in poultry, live stock, and dairy production has been noted in the last decade. Several truck crops, among them cabbage, Irish potatoes, and strawberries seem particularly adapted to the soil of this county.

Calhoun County has 20 sawmills and a score of turpentine distilleries. On account of the excellent clay found in many parts of the county, brick kilns have been operated here since earliest days. As a matter of fact, there is still today a landing on this river known as Brickyard Landing. The greatest single attraction of course is the region known as Dead Lakes, a sportsman's paradise.

Liberty County is not so fortunate for much of its area is included in the Apalachicola National Park reservation. There are many fruit orchards, all small in size, but furnishing a living for their owners. Turpentine operations and sawmills, Satsuma oranges, bee-keeping, raising of live stock, and poultry farming are the chief occupations of the approximately 4,000 inhabitants of the county.





A trip up the river will disclose farms and groves scattered back from both banks, but the oftenest seen, other than the ever-changing scenes of hardwood trees, are the so-called "landings" where the naval stores and forest products are loaded aboard barges and boats.

As Apalachicola is left astern, the craft is headed in a northwesterly direction for five miles, at which point the Apalachicola Northern railroad bridge crosses. West of the bridge is the mouth of Jackson River, part of the Intracoastal Waterway system. Keeping on a northward course, the route follows the river channel and at about one mile north of the junction, the mouth of the St. Mary's River is seen on the right. Dead ahead is an island, about one and one-half miles long, heavily timbered.

On the right at this point is the southern tip of the Apalachicola Forest, an immense tract of land under the supervision of the U. S. Forest Service. This forest contains 276,505 acres of land, the greater portion being in Liberty County with only a small section along the river bank in Franklin County. Both the flatwoods area and the hardwood belt along the river banks have been cut over and burned several times, yet enough seed trees remain to restock this forest. The entire reservation is used for experimental work in the production of naval stores and lumber. Slash and long leaf pine trees are the chief stand.

About four miles east of the river bank is an area locally known as TATE'S HELL. It is an impenetrable swamp with undergrowth so dense that it resembles some of the African jungles. Covering an area of about 80 square miles, it is the home of every known Florida species of wild animals. On a trip into the swamp it is a common sight to see bears and wildcats and hear the blood curdling scream of the panther. Once heard, this scream is never forgotten. It is said by natives living near the swamp and who have hunted there for many years, that the brush and undergrowth in spots is so thick that it is 25 to 30 feet deep. They further state that it is not an unusual thing, while walking in this jungle, to be 20 feet above the ground itself. Deer have been killed at the usual shooting range and when reached, found to be 15 feet below the level of the hunter, the carcass dropping into a depression in the undergrowth.

There are many tales told about the horrors of Tate's Hell, some true, some legendary, but enough is known to almost convince the skeptical that the name is not altogether unsuited. There is an old legend that a Mr. Tate was last seen entering this jungle. He has never been found so it is believed that he was a victim of wild animals that inhabited the swamp....hence the name.



Traveling northward on the river, at the 9 m. point, the BROTHERS RIVER joins on the left. It courses the western shore of Forbes Island, a wooded terrain about five miles long. Here the Apalachicola is nearly a mile wide, the water from the two streams blending with only small signs of eddies. Keeping to the right, the yachtsman sees isolated farms through the trees, with here and there a darky or an old pipe-smoking "mammy" dangling a fishing line from the end of a long cane pole. While to the everyday person this river trip may be just another monotonous sail, to the lover of nature it holds many thrills. The sweet song of birds, the harsh call of others, the many wild flowers, trees, and vegetation of all kinds, each in itself serves to shorten the hours. The camera enthusiast has plenty of opportunity to snap scenes around bends, along shore or dead ahead, preserving mementos that in later years will bring back memories of a delightfully lazy river trip.

At about 15 miles on the right bank is old FORT GADSDEN LANDING, where more than 100 years ago the sound of heavy guns of U. S. ships bombarding a fort, reschoed and made the woods ring. It was here that the old NEGRO FORT was located.

Spain was then the owner of all Florida, with a stronghold located at Pensacola. General Andrew Jackson was chasing Indians in lower Georgia which was then American territory. Fleeing south, these Indians found refuge in Florida and near Pensacola. English and Spaniards welcomed these refugees as allies. Cutler's History of Florida states that "In August 1814, the Spaniards allowed Pensacola to be occupied by a British fleet under Capt. William H. Percy, with about 300 marines commanded by Lieut. Col. Edward Nicholls, and it is said that the Greeks who had escaped General Jackson were drilled by them in British uniforms on the streets of Pensacola. Before the American General could reach the British forces there, the commanders had departed with their Indian allies and 100 Negroes belonging to the Spanish residents of Pensacola.

"On the eastern bank of the Apalachicola, they built a fort on the spot afterwards occupied by Fort Gadsden. Primarily, it was to be a refuge for runaway Negroes and Indian refugees. Two large magazines were also constructed and filled with ammunition, and 3,000 stands of arms deposited for use in a war against the frontier settlements of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. How and why it was destroyed is thus told by Dr. Edwin L. Green in his history of Florida: "Even after the war of 1812, British agents continued to incite the Seminoles to commit depredations on the lower Georgia and Alabama settlements. And the fort built by Percy and Nicholls became an obstruction to navigation. This refuge for Indians and fugitives was known as the Negro Fort and was under the command of a Negro named Garcia. In August 1816,





Colonel Clinch, 150 miles up the river at Fort Crawford, was notified that supplies were to be conveyed up the river to him; and that in case opposition was made by the Negro Fort to the navigation of the stream, it should be reduced. Learning of the arrival of the provisions at Apalachicola Bay. Colonel Clinch set out down the river with 116 men. On the way he was joined by a band of Creeks who were marching to attack the fort, and another body of these warriors increased his force the next day. From a prisoner he learned that the Midshipman Luffborough and four men had been sent from the transports into the river after fresh water, and that, attacked by the Seminoles, only one man of them had escaped.

"A part of the Indian allies were stationed near the fort to keep up a harrassing fire and shut off communication with the outside world, a second body, with a detachment of American troops went to the rear of the fort, and on the opposite bank of the river a battery was stationed below which the gunboats took position, coming up from the bay. Over the fort floated a red flag, the British Jack waving above it. The garrison opened fire at once, but so effectively was it answered that at the fifth discharge a hot-shot struck one of the magazines, exploding it, and blowing up the fort, which besides 100 warriors contained 200 women and children. Not over 50 escaped the explosion. Garcia and an outlawed Choctaw chief were tried by the friendly Indians and condemned to death for the murder of Midshipman Luffborough and his companions. The Spanish Negroes were handed back to the Spanish agent, and Colonel Clinch took charge of the slaves who were runaways from American owners. One hundred and sixty barrels of powder were secured from the uninjured magazine, besides property to the amount of \$200,000".

The destruction of the Negro Fort opened communication with New Orleans, by way of the Apalachicola River, and enabled the American force under General Gaines to protect the frontier settlement of southern Georgia and Alabama, as well as the scattered settlers of Northern Florida, still under Spanish protection.

At about 30 m. the course lies to the left and five miles farther on the stream is again divided, this time by CUT OFF ISLAND, more than 10 miles long and three and one-half miles across at the widest part. The Apalachicola River continues right and the CHIPOLA RIVER runs to the left. This island is a favorite hunting ground for there is plenty of small game to be found here in season. Fishermen also find use for this island as a camping ground and for fishing off the banks.



When the 42 m. point is reached the river is more than a mile wide. This is caused by a bay cutting into the eastern shore of Cut Off Island and forming a fine harbor in bad weather. There is a very good fishing for bream, stumpknockers, pike, big-mouth black bass--in this body of water. Live bait or artificial plugs can be used but the choicest sport is to use a flyrod with flies.

At 44.5 m is a long bend to the left into another bit of broad water formed by the merging of the "CUTOFF " a stream nearly a half mile wide, coming from Dead Lakes, and the Apalachicola River. If desired to visit Dead Lakes, head westward (left) 2.5 m.

DEAD LAKES, a partly submerged forest of standing timber, is said to be caused by the sinking of a large tract of land, caused by the underlying limestone being gradually honey-combed by subterranean streams, finally collapsing to form this 80-square-mile fishing and hunting territory. The water is more than 20 feet deep in spots and offers the finest fresh-water fishing in northwestern Florida. There are two score fishing camps scattered along the shores, and hundreds of people come from other states to fish, hunt, or just relax.

Cypress trees are here in countless numbers, and overhead thousands of birds roost and nest in the branches. No matter where the craft is stopped and the fishing line thrown over, there is good fishing. Aquatic birds are everywhere and a sudden flurry of wings from behind some huge age-old tree may be the first indication of their presence. The cool, woodsy fragrance, mingled with the clean smell of the water, is a tonic to tired jaded nerves, and many people, anxious to get away from the strenuous business of the city, come to Dead Lakes for vacations. Along the shores, signs of campfires can be seen and clearings show that hunters and fishermen have pitched tents for a prolonged stay.

There are numerous small streams or branches leading many miles into the interior but shallow-draft boats only can be used. It is wise to hire a guide at one of the various camps in order to make a safe trip, for it is easy to get lost in the crooked and sometimes dark labyrinths of "runs," creeks, etc.

About five miles north of the Cutoff, on the western shore of Dead Lakes, is the settlement of BUCKHORN, located on State 6.





South of the Cutoff about two miles down Lee Slough (depth five feet). on the western bank, are the piers and landings leading to WEWAHITCHKA, seat of Gulf County. The name of the town is an Indian word, meaning "Water Eyes," derived from the two beautiful lakes located in the center of the town. Wewahitchka has a population (1935 census) of 750, supports a weekly newspaper, an ice plant, electric and water systems, and the usual amount of small stores to be found in the average Florida town of this size. Lumbering is carried on to some extent but the leading industry of the town and its environments is the packing and shipping of tupelo honey. There are dozens of individuals and firms that specialize in beekeeping and packing of honey and wax. The combined annual capacity is in excess of four hundred thousand pounds each year. The town could rightfully be called TUPELOTOWN instead of its often mispronounced Indian name.

Naval Stores do not lag behind, for 1,000 barrels of turpentine and 3,000 barrels of rosin are shipped each year from this otherwise unimportant village. A short distance from town is a nursery that raises Satsuma orange stock. Here the entire growing method can be seen from the time the seed is planted to the half-grown stock ready for transplanting in the groves. Wewahitchka offers limited accommodations but necessary food supplies, gasoline, and oil are obtainable.

Returning by way of the Cutoff to the Apalachicola River and continuing northward, it will be noticed that the river banks are higher and often become bluffs. Small streams join the river from both sides and the careful observer will notice that some streams are very dark, almost coffee-colored, while others are clear water. The dark water is from swamps and creeks that drain the woodlands while the clear water is overflow from springs. There are many bands and turns to be negotiated but the course is easy to follow. At approximately 55 m. the right-hand branch of the stream is followed for here again a large island nearly seven miles long takes up the center of the river. Opposite the 62 m. mark, on the left, is a bayou containing heavy undergrowth and some tall timber. This bayou is fed by small creeks and branches leading into deep pine-woods. It is not wise to enter these creeks for any distance except with canoes or light-draft rowboats, for in the majority of instances fallen trees, snags, and shoals prevent progress without a great deal of portaging.

As the upstream trip is continued, the next four miles are uninteresting until the river again forks. This time the left fork is favored for the right branch simply leads around a mile-long island to rejoin the main stream. So far the route has been in an almost northerly direction but at the 70 m. mark a neck of land is rounded and the course is due southeast for a few yards more than a mile, when it again veers northwestward.



Two miles north of this point, on the left bank, is a ferry landing and the continuation of State 19, leading to BLOUNTSTOWN, seat of Calhoun County. The city was named for John Blount, a native chief of the Seminoles. It is located on the west side of the old reservation that was ceded to the United States by a treaty made October 11, 1822 at Tallahassee when the band agreed to move to new territory west of the Mississippi.

In 1935 it had a population of 1,620 within the city limits and almost as many more living in the voting precinct. Lumbering and naval stores are chief industries and there is a plant there manufacturing pine tar oils, pine tar, and charcoal. Several grist mills grind corn for the farmers and the retail trade.

Blountstown lies about a mile west of the river on State 6, has good stores of all kinds and is the trading center for an outstretching farming territory. An airport is located north of the town.

About one mile east of the river bank (on the opposite shore) is BRISTOL, seat of Liberty County. It has a population of 1,259 U. S. (1935 census) and the chief industries are lumbering and naval stores. A large number of cypress and white cedar poles are out to be shipped to other cities. The usual smalltown stores supply the outlying area with necessities.

South of the road (State 19), about a mile southwest of the town are some Indian mounds composed of shells. These mounds were investigated by Clarence B. Moore for the Smithsonian Institute and the relics found are described in the institute reports on file in many libraries.

Bristol is one of the old towns in this section of the country and the old wooden courthouse dates back to. (?)

From here the river runs in a northwesterly direction for almost three miles, where it makes another "S" curve to head north. No towns are passed and the only signs of life along the river are perhaps a fisherman, a passing river packet, or another yachtsman. Occasionally the weather-beaten home of some farmer can be seen through a clearing, or some turpentine worker's shack looms up through the woods. There are no roads near the river banks from this point north and in a case of emergency it will be necessary to push the nose of the boat into the bank and walk directly west to eventually strike State 126. If Lady Luck is smiling, a passing motorist will be able to give directions to the nearest settlement, which are few and far between.





One of the old landings on the river is ROCK BLUFF, now a part of the Torreya State Park, a beauty spot with much history attached. It was here that troops had guarded the river during the Civil War and the immense warehouse that still stands at Rock Bluff Landing was used as a storage plant for ammunition. It is an interesting old structure for its heavy beams were not nailed; wooden pegs were driven through the junctions and then cut off smooth.

Prior to the Civil War, if visitors and others desired to stay overnight or await the coming of the river steamer, the second floor was turned into lodging accommodations. Beds were easily put up and made up and blanket rolls played no unimportant part in the lives of the less fortunate travelers who occasionally did stop off to visit the planter there at that time.

It being quite a pull uphill to bring freight from the river edge to the warehouse, a small "donkey road" with its rails imbedded in the clay was built. Small tram cars were hauled by the patient donkeys and in this manner was the handling of merchandise expedited. One of these small carts is on exhibition in the museum in the park.

During the war the gun placements were built of torrey wood out from logs that grow in the park. This wood is said to be next to cypress in lasting qualities and the work of soldiers, done 82 years ago, can still be seen. The ammunition pits, the communicating trenches and the gun emplacements are at Battery Point where Confederate soldiers scanned the river for the enemy craft. This wood is said to be the same as that of which Noah built his ark for the scriptures say that "The Lord commanded Noah to make the ark of Gopherwood." Gopherwood is just another name for the tree, also sometimes called "stinking cedar." The fruit, very similar to olives in appearance, when out in two, resemble a halved fig and smell somewhat like guavas.

This park is located on the east bank of the river opposite Ocheesee Bluff, just a few miles north of the Blountstown bridge. It has been cleaned up and beautified by CCC boys and is now under the supervision of Florida Park Service. It was at this point that the Old Spanish Trail and the St. Augustine-Pensacola Trail and the St. Augustine-Pensacola Trail crossed the river.

On the opposite side of the river, about two miles west, is the small town of OCHEESE, so named after an Indian chief who had his tribe quartered in the vicinity. It is a farming and lumbering community "stuck out in the sticks," a reference often made to settlements far away from the highways.

Northward for another run of about 15 miles and VICTORY BRIDGE is sighted, This concrete span carries the traffic of US 90, the



Old Spanish Trail of today. The abutments are anchored in the rocky banks of the river and the eight spans are high enough to allow unusually high tides to flow underneath without encroaching on the roadway.

On the right bank is the town of RIVER JUNCTION, so named owing to its location at the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers. It is mainly a residential community, being the home of many employees of the State Hospital located north of the city. The population in 1935 was 2,563, consisting of 1,970 white and only 593 colored. Lumbering and pulpwood are the chief industries. It is the regular stop for all river steamers and is the head of navigation, although it is possible for smaller boats to go still another 165 miles northward on the Chattahoochee River to Columbus, Ga. and Eufaula, Ala., a channel four feet deep by 100 feet wide being used by a number of river packets. On the right is the FLINT RIVER, having a channel three feet deep and 100 feet wide, navigable for 100 miles northward to Albany and Bainbridge Ga.

On the north side of the highway (US 90), atop the hills, are the white buildings of the Florida State Hospital, better known as Chattahoochee. Here nearly 4,000 (1938) figures) cases of mentally sick are being cared for and given the best treatment known to medical science. The spacious grounds contain a number of buildings among them being several of historical interest. The repair and workshops, as they are known today, were used in 1818 as powder magazines by Gen. Andrew Jackson during his campaign to drive the Indians out of that section of Florida. The tall building known as the shot tower, has walls three to four feet thick and was used as an arsenal during the Civil War. In earlier days, before fine shot was made by mechanical means, this tower was used to make the small pellets used in shotgun shells. Hot lead was dropped or poured out of ladles from a platform located near the top of the tower, the hot lead falling into a huge tank of water. In dropping the distance from top to bottom, the lead formed into drops that gradually rounded off by themselves and when reaching the water were cooled off immediately, thus forming small round bullets. Today these same pellets are cast by machine.

Visitors are allowed to enter the grounds and also some of the buildings, to visit patients and learn what latest methods in caring for these patients are used. The hospital operates a beauty parlor, it having been found that these vanity treatments are of some benefit to the women patients.





Chattahoochee as a town has its own fire department, a police force, and many other city improvements. It uses electricity furnished by River Junction. Being primarily a hospital, it has very few business institutions although there is a sand and gravel company located there that has a capacity of 1,000 tons of sand and 2,000 tons of gravel each working day. A pulpwood cutting company also has its headquarters there, employing enough labor to cut and ship 100 cords of wood per day. This wood is shipped to paper mills in Florida to be converted into Kraft (wrapping) paper and high test cardboard.

The Apalachicola River is joined by the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers at the northern edge of the city, the Chattahoochee going off in a northwesterly direction while the Flint veers to the right.

Fishing in all three streams and boating is enjoyed by citizens of these two communities and picnic grounds are located along the river banks. Many people from southern Georgia and northern Florida often spend vacations near the junction of these streams. Accommodations are available.



FLORIDA MERCHANT MARINE SURVEY

Miami, Florida Office

C O P Y

VII.1.

The Development of the Florida Merchant Marine

CHAPTER VII

STEAM BOATS OF THE FLORIDA RIVERS.

A century ago Apalachicola was a thriving city, boasting five banks, large brick warehouses and cotton compresses, and second only to New Orleans as a cotton port. The cotton was brought on steam boats from the fertile plantations of Georgia and Alabama, compressed here, and loaded on ocean going vessels for foreign and domestic ports. So sturdy and well built were these river boats that when the cotton was ready for shipment the first one available took it out to the pass for loading on a sailing vessel. The shipping business was so enormous at this time that old timers tell of seeing all warehouses full and cotton bales piled in the streets for five and six blocks.

All freight and mail were brought in by the steamboats, and the only means of transportation was by steamer. Until well up into this century the only communication Apalachicola had with the outside world was by steam boat to Columbus and Bainbridge, Ga., Mufala, Ala., or by the Steamer Crescent City to Carrabelle, Fla. The Crescent City was owned and operated by the GCSA Railway and made connection with their trains at Carrabelle. The first steam boats were side wheelers and later stern wheelers. The Crescent City was converted from a side wheeler to a stern wheeler in 1894.

Attached is a photograph of a small freight boat which operated between Apalachicola and Albany, Ga. I also attach list of river steamers operating on the Apalachicola River and tributaries from 1828 to 1883, and I am sure as late as 1910 as I remember some of them quite well.

When shipping was resumed after the Civil War, Capt. J. B. McNeil brought the first steam boat down the river. The entire crew of this boat as well as other river boats of that period was composed of white men.

With the coming of the railroad to Georgia and Alabama cotton could be shipped to Savannah, Ga., at a cheaper freight rate and in less time than by boat to Apalachicola and loaded on sailing vessels. Cotton shipments dwindled, and freight and passengers were the only means of revenue to the steamboats. Lumber mills were operating here at that time and crews from the swamps, mill





## Chapter VII

### Steam Boats of the Florida Rivers.

officials, etc., used these steamers, but business kept shrinking, and the coming of the railroad to Apalachicola was the death blow to the steam boat on this river, and today except for pleasure boats and an occasional boat towing logs, the Apalachicola is a deserted river, and the once prosperous city a sleepy little town.



List of River Steam Boats operating on Apalachicola  
River and Tributaries.

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
Farney	1/26/1828	John Jenkins	68.41
Stubenville	2/6/1828	H. J. Wood	148.73
Monroe	5/1/1828	Reuben Bender	70.32
Virginia	6/3/1828	Sam'l Simpson	123.27
Robert Bennett	12/14/1829	H. J. Wood	61.16
Georgian	6/3/1831	D. J. Britt	120.34
Baltimore	2/23/1831	John Jenkins	73.7
Plaquemine	3/15/1831	Miram Lee	66.72
General Marian	3/31/1831	Wm. Morton Jr.	88.
Columbus	12/22/1832	D. J. Britt	127.69
Chattahoochee	2/12/1833	Joshua Grant	92.12
Andy Jackson	6/5/1838	Vincent Higgins	98.45
Songamon	6/5/1834	J. M. Harris	103.62
Van Buren	1/23/1834	C. Cadwalader	94.65
Versailles	12/4/1832	- -	85.90
Native Georgian	4/26/1834	R. P. Sayard	93.
Polander	11/29/1834	Mez R. Wood	138.38
Ellen	12/5/1834	John Jenkins	122.25
Elouisa	12/17/1834	D. J. Britt	171.77
Southern	12/17/1834	J. M. Harris	171.43
Reindeer	10/22/1835	A. C. Phillips	134.39
Anna Calhoun	12/9/1835	J. E. Oconnor	133.57
Tomteechee	12/19/1835	F. Borden	230.54
Metamore	10/30/1835	J. Y. Smith	89.04
Hyperion	1/11/1836	A. Lenard	124.80
Planter	1/26/1836	Jacob Lyneer	110.38
Mary Meline	5/30/1836	T. J. Watts	37.
Floridian	10/30/1836	Thomas M. Eckirt	99.15
Free Trader	10/36/1836	J. Y. Smith	109.85
Edwin Forest	11/5/1836	James Holland	46.
Irwilton	10/13/1836	Isaac Brown	105.
C. L. Bass	10/30/1836	James Wood	103.75
Oceola	12/10/1836	J. H. Andrews	102.30
Florence	9/22/1837	J. M. Harris	86.94
Francis	11/23/1837	Jobe T. Niles	112.72
De Flore	12/2/1836	G. W. L. Bedell	106.63
Phoenix	1/5/1837	Mez Douglas	32.
Chamoise	1/10/1837	Josiah Bates	22.55
Winerva	1/31/1837	T. G. Green	87.83
Yallahuska	2/25/1837	E. J. Wood	86.14
Muscogee	4/3/1837	J. M. O'Cannon	117.45
Redney	12/13/1837	E. J. Wood	99.
Alabama	12/20/1837	H. Bickerstaff	127.
Commerce	4/2/1838	James Y. Smith	124.65
Cuba	11/28/1838	Henry Maars	--
Ion	4/5/1838	T. W. Beckwith	99.





<u>Name</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
Arao	4/9/1838	Jacob Rynsar	150.
Tempest	1/25/1838	Griffith	105.
Siren	10/31/1839	A. Leonard	110.
Tallahassee	10/13/1839	Henry Allen	133.36
Lewis, C. S.	1/8/1839	E. Brooks	111.14
Tropical	1/26/1839	Jacob Snyder	100.86
Tropicalcosa	1/13/1839	John Roland	136.49
Tolloosa	1/14/1839	J. Roland	146.49
Cobnee	12/8/1840	C. Cadwalader	115.27
Augusta	12/8/1840	J. M. Harris	132.44
General Harrison	7/14/1840	S. Dimmer	184.32
Oriole	1/23/1840	A. Leonard	110.22
Roanoke	2/2/1840	Jacob Bynder	99.86
F. Y. Smith	3/29/1840	J. Y. Smith	148.92
Columbus No. 2	12/2/1842	H. Allen	126.39
Con'l Sumpter	12/29/1842	Wm. R. Bell	156.12
Agnes	2/3/1843	John Jenkins	85.73
Apalachicola	4/12/1843	Slade Sutton	148.85
Charleston	10/31/1843	John W. Freeman	132.32
Boston	12/1/1843	John D. Rolland	137.75
Champion	2/2/1844	C. Cadwalader	148.57
Moiton	11/1/1844	John A. Morton	145.25
Lotus	1/13/1845	A. T. Bennett	202.76
Emily	11/4/1845	John D. Roland	144.86
Viola	11/15/1845	H. W. VanVoghten	156.30
Peytona	12/6/1845	David Crier	183.27
Eufaula	12/6/1845	Appling	131.40
Mary A. Moore	12/24/1845	John M. Moore	195.49
Albany	3/9/1846	Wm. M. Griffin	168.12
Flint	3/16/1846	Allen Gage	31.73
Magaolia	2/19/1847	J. S. Kumer	207.10
Southerner	4/5/1847	Rez. B. Good	100.83
Quincy	1/14/1848	Henry Allen	157.45
H. S. Smith	2/4/1848	John W. Freeman	230.
Palmetto	11/5/1848	W. J. McAlister	136.66
Fashion	12/6/1848	C. Cadwalader	149.
Mary	12/27/1849	Jacob Rynear	143.12
Wynton	2/25/1850	John A. Morton	137.13
New Boston	9/14/1850	C. M. Lea	146.65
Falcon	10/24/1850	C. D. Fry	185.81
Retrieve	12/20/1850	W. S. Bell	204.25
Swan	1/6/1852	L. T. Woodruff	168.23
J. J. Jenkins	2/3/1852	Henry Allen	145.71
America	5/24/1852	W. J. McAlister	372.20
Franklyn	11/16/1852	Thomas Berry	181.91
Henry No. 1	11/20/1852	Green S. Cox	78.45
Cusseta	11/22/1852	John W. Freeman	201.34
Eagle	3/7/1853	H. W. VanVoghten	200.68





<u>Name</u>	<u>Arrival</u>	<u>Master</u>	<u>Tonnage</u>
Union	3/10/1853	L. C. Moton	203.22
Alabama No. 2	3/10/1853	Daniel A. McCall	213.23
D. J. Day	3/23/1853	A. Stow	212.51
South Carolina	3/25/1853	W. J. McAlister	173.55
Oswichee	12/2/1852	John A. Morton	213.20
Tampa	2/11/1854	Thomas Mohin	109.03
Gem Stokes	4/12/1854	W. L. Stapler	140.40
Harriett	4/16/1856	Chas. Marorum	95.46
Laura	4/19/1856	W. J. McAlister	83.27
Wave	12/20/1858	Mez. Wingate	243.15
Chowala	2/15/1858	Thos. Berry	162.23
River Bridge	10/3/1859	James Pendergast	72.02
Munnerlyn	12/5/1859	W. J. McAlister	106.57
John G. Jalhoun	12/16/1859	E. M. Bryan	165.51
Mariauna	1/16/1860	H. A. Van Voghten	206.50
Jackson	3/30/1860	Dan Fry	84.24
Uchee	11/10/1860	W. L. Stapler	174.86
Wm. H. Yong	11/10/1860	Thos. Berry	179.73
Indian No. 1	12/4/1860	Andy W. Wing	112.77
Time	9/1/1860	Mez. Wingate	163.05
Shamrock	11/8/1864	Mez. Wingate	105.57
Chipola	9/16/1866	Van Marcus	48.84
Huntsman	10/1/1866	John O. Martin	- -
Atlanta	2/12/1866	W. L. Stapler	230.50
I. D. Swain	1867	Andy W. Wing	- -
New Jackson	1863	Dan Fry	- -
Music	1869	Blanchard	- -
Dudley Buck	-	Jas. Durham	- -
Julia St. Clair	1868	Sam J. Whiteside	- -
Bandy Moore	1868	Geo. H. Whiteside	- -
J. A. Farley	1872	I. J. Williams	- -
G. W. Wyley	1874	Geo. H. Whiteside	- -
Clara Dunning	1874	Graham	- -
Big Foot	1873	I. Cokes	- -
G. Gunby Jordan	1877	T. H. Moore	- -
W. S. Holt	1878	Geo. H. Whiteside	- -
Mary Elizabeth	9/14/1878	A. Pratt	- -
T. H. Moore	11/27/1878	Isaac J. Williams	- -
Rebecca Averingham	11/15/1880	Geo. H. Whiteside	- -
Caddo Belle	9/27/1881	McCormick	- -
Chattahoochee	2/22/1882	T. H. Moore	- -
Threasteaska	11/4/1882	T. H. Moore	- -
Amos Hays	8/3/1883	T. A. Marorum	- -
Chipley	- -	- -	- -
Naiad	- -	- -	- -
Flint	- -	Dewshitchka	- -
C. D. Owens	- -	W. D. Ellis	- -
Bay City	- -	- -	- -
Thetis	- -	Pactolis	- -
Janie Rea	- -	Caddo Belle	- -
W. E. Kelly	- -	Fannie Fearn	- -
Gertrude	- -	Ruth #1	- -
Ocheace	- -	Lotus #2	- -
Eunela	- -	Bell of the Bend	- -



Bessie Clary	-	-
J. R. Sharp	-	-
Drake	-	-
3 States	-	-
W. C. Bradley	-	-
Queen City	-	-
Ft. Gaines	-	-
U. S. Chattahoochee		
U. S. Flint		
U. S. Columbus		
Bertha Lee		
Ruth No. 2		
Ruby		
Aid		
Apalaches		
Sun		
Callahan		
Haile		

City of Columbus  
 Mascot  
 Griggs  
 Mary  
 Faust  
 Callahan  
 Ruth No. 1  
 Ruby  
 Ruby  
 Aid  
 Apalachee  
 Sun  
 Callahan  
 Haile  
 Forest  
 Mary  
 Griggs





FLORIDA MERCHANT MARINE SURVEY

Miami, Florida Office

C O P Y

VII.a.

Tallahassee, Fla.  
5-2-38

Dear Mr. Long:- I have just completed a check on the boats on the Apalachicola and Ochlockinee rivers. There is only about a half dozen boats that are now used as gravel boats or boats used to tow log to the several saw mills on the river. I have reported these boats to the office on forms # 3 101. There are no boats at all navigating the Ochlockinee river.

Now let us go back to about the year 1845 and see about the navigation on these rivers. The Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, flowing through the rich cotton belt of central Georgia come together at the Florida and Georgia line forming the Apalachicola river, thus giving a wonderful waterway to the Gulf. In the early days of 1840 thousand of bales of cotton was grown on the farms on these river. The merchants in Columbus Georgia became interested in steam boat building, a company was incorporated in 1852, that built boats of several different sizes. The boats running from River Junction Florida to Columbus Ga. up the Chattahoochee river, and up the Flint up to Albany, Georgia were boats built on the flat bottom type, driven by steam wheels, or large paddle wheels at the rear of the boat. These were known as the old paddle wheel type. These little boats when loaded carried about nine hundred to a thousand bales of cotton, and



drawing about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. of water, 100 to 120 ft. long, and 20 to 25 ft. wide, making round trip from Columbus Ga. to River Junction, a distance of 150 miles in six days. At River Junction Fla. they would deliver their cargo to the big boats that navigated the Apalachicola to Apalachicola on the Gulf. The Apalachicola river boats were 150 to 175 ft. long drawing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 ft. of water, and having faster speed.

The old flat bottom stearn-wheel type was displaced by the round bottom propeller type about the year 1899. The old stearn wheel required deeper water, as the wheel or paddles had to penetrate deeper into the water.

The boats used on the Oclocknee river were of the same type but much smaller, being about seventy-five to ninety ft. long 14 ft. wide,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 ft. deep.

I think we may be able to secure a picture of some of these boats. There is one of the last ones that ran the Apalachicola river on dry dock at River Junction Fla was floated to high ground during a full river and was never moved. If you wish me to, I can make a picture of it and send to you.

I understand there is an old lady 82 years at Carrabelle Fla. that could give us some information concerning early shiping from that city. She has lived at Carrabelle since her child-hood days, and too her father and oldest brother were sea captains.





The old steamer "Tarpon" that wrecked last summer, and went down with its old captain and most of the crew, have been replaced by a modern steamer. The Tarpon was in use 56 years. If we could get a picture of her, and one of the new one why we could illustrate a change in that length of time.

I went to the custom house at Apalachicola last week but Mr. Benson did not have any record of any of the old vessels that once made that port, only kept records 15 years, and then destroyed them which was a ruling or privilege granted by the Commission of Customs. However Mr. Benson, who is not an old man, says that some old person who was reared at Carrabell or Apalachicola could give us more information than he.

The hull of a old historic boat partly burried in sand, that must have been about forty ft long ten or twelve ft wide, that have been sunk for more than 140 years according to old citizens living in this neighborhood. You could see notches at the top of the gunnels that was used for oars to rest in. Just what a craft could have been used for in those days no one seem to know. It was evidently moved by man-power, was built of cypress boards split from trees, was put together with wood pegs. The rear end was burried, leaving about two-thirds out from under sand, that the water had preserved. All above low water mark was decayed and gone. On my trip to Apalachicola last week, I saw forty or fifty oyster schooners out at bay. I was



told that they were planting oysters. They were about 35 to forty ft long.

Mr. Long I do not know that this is worth anything to you in the way of preparing your manuscript, but will give you some idea what you want me to do for you. Anything you wish to know about steam boating on the Florida rivers, I feel sure I can get it for you. Such as picture, owners, where built, kind of freight hauled, speed of boats, types used at different periods, size used on different river or any other information. As for the old Spanish or English ships, it seems as though we will have to be satisfied with what we can get from old newspaper clippings several of which can be had from Mr. W. T. Cash. He has in his office an old "Pensacola Gazette" published beginning in 1824 to 1826 giving the ship news. I checked over these paper, the first two weeks of my work, finding 87 different ships (sailing vessels) that made port at Pensacola, Apalachicola, Mobile, Ala. Quite often moving some of the cargo, suprising to note, some giving as much as 100 barrels of deer horns, three bbls. ox hides, 50 bbls. whisky.

Please advise me at you earliest conveniency just what you want me to do, especially on Chapter 7. I am

Yours truly

(signed) D.W.Stoutemire





St. Johns  
Palatka

Specs Copy

## STEAMSHIPS

The army transport Esseon, which brought troops and military supplies to Palatka during the Seminole war, was probably the pioneer in a long procession of steamboats connecting the city with the outside world. In 1845 business interests of Savannah reached out for cotton grown in Putnam county and the steamboats Ocmulgee, St. Matthews and William Gaston made regular runs between palatka and the Georgia seaport. Two new steamers were placed in this service in 1851, but both were destroyed within a few years. The Welake ran aground while maneuvering to cross the St. Johns river bar and was wrecked. The boiler of the Magnolia exploded and her captain, William T. McNelty, was killed. These ships were replaced by two other steamers, the Seminole and St. Johns, which began operation about 1853, but their service was also short-lived. Both were burned at was raised, rebuilt and appeared again on the river after the War between the States under the name of Helen Getty. In 1857 the last and largest of these ante-bellum steamboats, the St. Mary's, was operated on the Palatka-Savannah run under command of Capt. James Freeborn. Jacksonville.

In the meantime Charleston had made a determined bid for Florida cotton trade and steamboats from the South Carolina port became a familiar sight at Palatka wharves.

The first of these ships was the Florida, which made its initial run to Palatka in 1851 under command of Capt. Lewis M. Coxetter. Two years later Capt. Coxetter built a larger vessel, the Carolina, which was used on the Palatka-Charleston run until the outbreak of the war. Later Capt. Coxetter built the Everglade, another large steamer, operating between Palatka, Savannah and Charleston. The Gordon and Cecile also made regular runs in this trade. It was the Gordon, carrying Confederate Commissioners Mason and Slidell on their errand to England and France, which escaped through the Federal blockade at Charleston during the War between the States.

After the war the finest steamer between Palatka and Charleston was the new St. Johns. This ship was chosen later as reception boat at the Yorktown Centennial. Another post-war steamer active in passenger and freight trade between Palatka and Savannah, was the Nick King, rebuilt from the iron hull of a vessel destroyed during hostilities. Gen. Robert E. Lee traveled on this steamer when he visited Palatka in the spring of 1870. (2)

When tourist business reached its height in the eighties many more steamers and some sailing ships were added to the fleet on the St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers, transporting passengers and freight beyond this city to Gainesville,





Ocala and Leesburg, Vessels not previously mentioned which operated on these routes, with names of the companies owning them were:

Charleston Line (Palatka to Charleston, S. C.); steamers: City Point, Calhoun, Dictator, City of Palatka and City of Monticello. The City of Palatka was the first double propeller steamboat to operate on the St. Johns river.

Savannah Line (Palatka to Savannah, Ga.); steamers: Lizzie Baker, Fannie Dugan, Sappho and Sylvan Shore.

Warren Ray Line of Schooners (Palatka to New York); brought ice; loaded cotton and corn.

Hart Line (St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers); steamers: Griffin, Silver Springs, Ocklawaha, Marion, Okeehumkee, Astatula, Osceola and Hiawatha.

Teasdale and Reid Line (Ocklawaha rivers; steamers: Lollie Boy, Meta and Tuscawilla.

Lucas Line (St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers); steamers: Alligator, Camusi and Metamora.

Beach and Miller Line (Palatka, Drayton Island, Crescent City, Jacksonville); steamers: Comet, Georgia, Crescent City, Gov. Safford, Crescent and Star.

DeBarry Line (Palatka to Jacksonville); steamers: Anita, Pastime, Florence, Water Lily, Rosa, Frederick de Barry and City of Jacksonville. This line consolidated with the Baya Line in the early eighties and was later sold to the Clyde Line.

Baya Line (Palatka to Jacksonville); steamers: Sylvan Glen, and H. T. Baya.

Post Line (Palatka to Jacksonville); steamers: John Sylvester and Eliza Hancock, Flora and May Draper.

Peoples' Line (Plant System), Palatka, Sanford, Jacksonville; the H.B. Plant, first all steel steamer in the United States; Jennie Lane, Chattahoochee, Margaret and Uncle Sam.

Lund Line (St. Johns river points); steamers: Volusia and Hattie.

Clyde Line (Palatka, Sanford, Jacksonville) steamers: City of Jacksonville, Everglade, Welaka and Osceola. This line operated also to Crescent City for a short time.

Steamers operated independently between Palatka and points on the St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers were: the Cygnus, Gazelle, Starlight, Marion, Daylight, City of Georgetown, Vigilant, Queen of the St. Johns, Chesapeake, Swan, William Howard, Fearless,





FLORIDA WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
(STATE OFFICE)  
EXCHANGE BUILDING  
JACKSONVILLE

Room 9, Old Court House,  
Orlando, Florida.  
August 17, 1936.

*Kissimmee River*  
PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY: ATTENTION

Dr. Carita Doggett Corse, State Director,  
Federal Writers' Projects,  
Roberts Building,  
Jacksonville, Florida.

Att: D. B. Chenoweth

Dear Mr. Chenoweth:

So far I have been unable to get much information about John Jacob Astor's honeymoon trip. Mr. Miller, our worker in Kissimmee, writes:

"With reference to the John Jacob Astor honeymoon trip down the Kissimmee river, I have been able to find very little definite and authenticated information. James M. Willson, Jr., remembers seeing Mr. Astor in the billiard room of the old Tropical hotel here, but cannot recall the year, even approximately. Mrs. Willson says a Kissimmee liveryman who, unlike most of the natives, was not overawed by either the elegance of the hotel or the social and financial standing of Mr. Astor, bravely went into the hotel, horse whip in hand, and engaged the financier in conversation.

"Capt. George Steffee, and Mrs. Steffee, who was the daughter of Capt. Clay Johnson, both remember the incident of the Astor visit, but are unable to remember the approximate date. Notables were constantly visiting Kissimmee and taking the down-river trip on the "Disston", doubtless brought here by the personal influence of Disston and his Philadelphia associates. I believe the first Mrs. Astor was a Philadelphia girl. The Disston people were trying to sell land in large plots to northern interests. This really was the motive behind their culture of peaches, sugar cane, rice, vegetables and other crops.

"President Arthur visited Kissimmee and inspected the canals Disston was digging. At one point between Lake Tohopekaliga and Cypress land a large "turn-around", or boat basin was made particularly to permit the "Disston", bearing the president, to turn around and return to Kissimmee. I believe the canal was not yet completed. The basin was named, and still is known to rivermen, as Arthur's Cut.

"Files of the Kissimmee Valley and the Kissinnee Valley Gazette, available here, start with 1897, so I have been unable to get any information of the kind Mr. Chenoweth wants.

"Mr. Willson says it was the current thing to feed "tenderfeet"





alligator steak on the trip down the river, usually allowing them to believe it was catfish. The alligator steak is a large white muscle from the 'gator's tail. Willson says it is rather a toothsome dish, but repulsive to many people because it is part of a reptile. Perhaps this prank was played on the Astors.

Mrs. Minnie Moore Willson writes: " Regarding the inquiry concerning John Jacob Astor's visit here, I rather believe I have more than all Florida on this memorable visit. They only remained at the hotel long enough to catch the side-wheeler boat, and the newspaper of that day is relegated to the forgotten doings. The files are destroyed, and there was no correspondent then for the Times Union. ... At this date "The Tropical Hotel" doors were not open to the town - cowboys, etc., but because the livery man knew no such word as repulse, he went where he pleased. ..I have a good memory and it was told to me, the story of Mr. Goodbread and the Astor's visit which was a "stop-over".

In Mrs. Willson's booklet, History of Osceola County ,. Florida Frontier Life , she writes:

"The Tropical Hotel burned to the ground in March, 1896...

"The Tropical Hotel was the pride of the new town and deservedly so. The large expanse of ground, facing Tohopekaliga Lake, was the site of the commodious hostelry, and was in these spring days like a picture under glass, with its beds of white lilies, tube roses and other flowers. The splashing waters of the lake rolled up on the shore and the rowboats and other water craft kept a tossing, turbulent music as they were rocked by the waves, tied as they were to the boat house. ...

"During the frontier days of life in Kissimmee many celebrated people visited the capital of Osceola County.

"The great Disston Sugar Mill attracted the wealth of the Nation and Kissimmee was the destination for these visitors and scientific men. Notable, was the visit of John Jacob Astor, when he came with his bride, a honeymoon trip, to see the pioneer life and to peer into the sugar industry conducted at St. Cloud, that was being broadcast over America.

"The Tropical Hotel, quite commodious for those days, was the stopping place and here John Jacob Astor registered and enjoyed a typical life of native Florida. This scion of the Astor family, as the world knows, later showed his heroism, when as a passenger on the ill-fated Titanic when she struck an iceberg, he superintended the saving of the terror-stricken passengers and gave up his seat in the life boat, knowing nothing but death awaited him, as the vessel sank sending hundreds to a watery grave.

"Referring to the Kissimmee visit, at that time only sleek horses and carriages were in use; while the Tropical Hotel drew a strong social line against visitors not registered, the livery man, seeking trade, entered the portals of this hotel when he wished. Always, Mr. Goodbread, proprietor of the stables, carried his long, black carriage whip over his shoulder, and having the reputation





of fearing nothing, came to the hotel every day.

"This special evening a fine billiard game was in progress, with Mrs. Astor seated near the table watching the play as her husband led the game. With a fine shot from John Jacob's cue, Mr. Goodbread rushed to his side, and with a smack on his shoulder, shouted, 'That was fine, old man, keep it up.' Someone interfered enough to tell the liveryman who the player was - which did not daunt this native son of Florida, nor was the multimillionaire at all perturbed at the familiarity given him.

"The beautiful scenic route from Lake Tohopekaliga through clean and newly cut canals, then through other lakes and canals, a distance of 165 miles, lured the Astors as they enjoyed a novel and beautiful trip to Lake Okeechobee.

"The Hamilton Disston was the side-wheel boat that carried the distinguished party. The jovial captain gave historic accounts of the scenes passed as they plowed through the blue waters.

"Birds of brilliant plumage, alligators lazily stretching on the sunny banks, fish in large quantities, all made a memorable trip for the newly-weds, as old residents still recall the visit.

I have quoted rather fully hoping that out of the lot you might be able to get something of what you want.

Did you want us to get from Mr. Lupper the depth at various points of the Kissimmee River. If so, at what points?

Very truly yours,

*Nellie B. Ramsdell*

Nellie B. Ramsdell, Local Supervisor  
Federal Writers' Project #430



Waterway History  
THE "ROSE ADA"  
(Written for Mr. Arends)

Copy to Arends

~~alter of motor~~

not edited

In 1890 Captain Clay Johnson of Kissimmee built the steamship "Rose Ada."\* This steamship was put in operation originally to carry freight and passengers from Kissimmee through lakes Tahopekaliga, Cypress, Hatchineba and Kissimmee to Ft. Bassenger. This trip took about two days. Later the service was extended through to Lake Okeechobee and Fort Myers.

The original purpose of this steamship was to haul freight, mainly corn and grain for the cattle raising country along the Kissimmee River.

Business had increased so with the turn of the century that Captain Johnson found the Rose Ada insufficient to handle all the freight so in 1900 he built another ship called the "Lillie." This steamship was a combination passenger and freight. Again in 1910 he built the Osceola. These three ships composed the Johnson fleet and for many years they handled all grain and fruit shipments along the Kissimmee River. They also carried all the passengers, for in those days of few and poor roads this was the best and fastest means of transportation.

These vessels were steam operated but were all equipped

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\* The Danns did not remember the cost of these boats.





with a rear paddle. This was necessary due to sand bars and shallow water, in which case the paddle could reverse and turn the boat around and into clear water.

Captain Johnson did all the banking for these people and often came home with bags of large silver pieces. He carried passengers free of charge and many times fed them and took them personally to their homes or hotels for the nite. However, occasionally he would take out charter parties for fishing and hunting. Sometimes as many as 13 children and innumerable packages were delivered on one trip.

Barges were also used up and down the river by the Johnson fleet but instead of towing them behind as at present they were pushed in front of the boat, being secured by means of cleats.

The Kissimmee River was known as the crookedest in the world and it was not unusual for a hunter to alight from the boat at one turn in the river, hunt for 30 minutes or so and pick up the boat at the next turn, no time being lost by either party.

In later years, with the advent of the railroad and the southward trend of the population of Kissimmee River, the fleet operated chiefly on Lake Okeechobee and took charter



parties to West Palm Beach and Fort Myers.

The fleet was finally abandoned by Captain Johnson after the storm of 1926, with the Lillie finding its way into the hands of Mr. E. P. Dann of Miami, who was Captain Johnson's son-in-law. This boat was remodeled and the upper deck removed and for some years was used by Mr. Dann and his family for pleasure trips and an occasional outing for the Isaak Walton League of Miami.

Captain Johnson died in 1931 at the age of 81, and the Lillie was finally junked in 1935.





Revised  
6/10/38  
M.H.A.

FLORIDA MERCHANT MARINE SURVEY - CHAPTER VII

Miami, Florida

Submitted by  
Kelsey Blanton,  
Senior Statistician

May 19, 1938

*Blanton*  
The Kissimmee River

The Kissimmee River, with broad out-lying prairies on either side, has its source in Lake Kissimmee near the mid-section of the Peninsula and flows into Lake Okeechobee, 95 miles to the south.

This river is usually marked by well-defined banks, along which in many places is a hammock fringe of oaks, hickories, magnolias, elms and many other forms characteristic of Florida woodlands, amidst which are delightful vantage points where vistas of the river with its winding channel and distant woodland fringes present scenes of grandeur and beauty. Much land in proximity with such points is rich and productive, well adapted to citrus growing and gardening, and it was at such places that many pioneers made their homes some of the best grazing lands in Florida lie along this river. In earlier days deer and turkeys could be hauled from cabin door-steps, while alligators and fur-bearing animals, particularly the otter and raccoon, offered rich rewards for hunters and trappers.

Pioneers, including ranchmen, farmers, trappers, naturalists, sportsmen and adventurers, drawn to the Kissimmee valley in the days following the final close of Seminole hostilities, were at first dependent for their market and their supplies upon overland routes by ox or horse teams to the older points. Prior to the projection of what is now the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad southward from Orlando in 1881, Kissimmee on the north shore of Lake





Tohopekaliga had become a trading post from which some trade by overland routes was carried on with settlers farther south. This post marked the northern limit of navigation. Small sailing craft were employed on the lakes, and some had made the difficult passage of the tortuous river channel, but oars and poles were kept in reserve to assist such craft in negotiating difficult points.

In this period, at least one small steamer, the Mary Belle, was built at Kissimmee, thus giving the people of the valley their first relief from the more arduous modes of transportation. Major Allen of Bassenger appears to have been the original owner of this steamboat. It was for a time piloted by Tom Bass Sr. of Kissimmee. It was on this boat that Bill Willingham, an outlaw and desperado from Fort Meade was captured by John Pearce, several of whose sons still live in that region of the state and one of whom, W. S. (Sid) lives at Fort Bassenger.

Willingham had killed two or three men about Fort Meade and had retired with a price on his head, to his ranch at Grape Hammock on the river. John Pearce at the time had bargained for and was operating the Mary Belle, and had tied up at Grape Hammock to deliver goods ordered by Willingham when the latter went aboard in a bad temper. He provoked an altercation in which he attacked Pearce with a knife, whereupon, the latter with the assistance of Jack Rooney and Bill Daughtry, members of his crew, tied Willingham so securely as to render him helpless. Willingham was taken across to the east side of the river, from which point Pearce carried him by ox team to Orlando and delivered him to officers of the law. This incident probably led to the destruction of the Mary Belle, for Pearce directed certain members of his crew to proceed on the southward voyage and make





necessary delivery of goods, and when they were in the neighborhood of Bassenger the boat sank and was lost. It was believed that the crew, fearing an encounter with Willingham in the event of his escape, purposely sank the boat to avoid the return trip.

The railroad was extended from Orlando to Kissimmee in the last days of 1881. In that year, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, under the guidance of Governor William D. Bloxham, made a contract with Hamilton Disston, a Pennsylvania capitalist and maker of the famous Disston Saws and other tools, for the drainage and reclamation of lands in the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee regions.

Disston immediately built a foundry, machine shop and a ship-yard on the water front at Kissimmee. He first built barges, dredges, and dredge tenders and by the latter part of 1882 had steam dredges in operation. Using the dipper type of dredge, he cleared streams or dug canals from the river to the tributary lakes, East Tohopekaliga, Hatchnehaw, Cypress, and Rosalie. His first task was opening a freer passage from Lake Tohopekaliga and through the lower lands and waters to the open channel of the river. Then the canal was dug from Lake Okeechobee to Lake Hicpochee, the head of navigation of the Caloosahatchee River, thus making a navigable water course from the town of Kissimmee to Fort Myers and on to the Gulf of Mexico.

Kissimmee, as a town, had its beginning amidst scenes of stirring enterprises and industry. The construction of buildings and civic enterprises in the rapidly developing community together with activities along the water front provided employment for architects, boat designers and builders,





mechanical engineers, and many skilled and common workmen. Extensive cane farms and a sugar mill were established by Disston in the area between Lakes Tohopekaliga and East Tohopekaliga, and experienced men were brought from Louisiana, to labor in that enterprise. As his chemist in this project, Disston brought from New Orleans Captain R. E. Rose, who later became State Chemist for Florida. Sawmills were established not only near Kissimmee, but along the river and on the lakes, the produced lumber being carried up river on barges.

Boilers and machinery for boats were made at the Disston foundary and shops. Many boats were built there, but a few early ones were brought in from other waters. Soon small steamboats became a familiar part of the scenes on the lakes and throughout the length of the river. Landings were established on the lakes and the river. The landing at Bassenger, then the most populous community of settlers and far down toward Lake Okeechobee, was the southern terminus for most of the river traffic. Boats without definite schedules would occasionally carry goods and passengers to lower points, even in to Fort Myers. Occasionally companies of tourists or pleasure-seekers would charter boats for the more extended trips. Among the better known landings between Kissimmee and Bassenger were South Port, Fort Gardner, Turkey Hammock, Rosalie, Grape Hammock, Rattle Snake Hammock, Alligator Bluff, Kisso, Orange Hammock, Micco Bluff, Long Hammock, Bluff Hammock, Fort Kissimmee, Mary Belle Landing and Fort Bassenger.

Outgoing cargoes from Kissimmee included grain, groceries, cloth and other general home supplies, farm and ranch equipment. Return cargoes included





hides, wool, furs, bird plumes, fish, citrus fruit, turpentine, rosin, and farm produce. In the latter part of the period boat loads of iced catfish were carried up stream from Lake Okeechobee.

After the building of improved roads in the second decade of the present century, within striking distance of Kissimmee river points river traffic began to decline, and after the extension of a branch of the Florida East Coast Railroad from Kenansville to Okeechobee City in 1916 the cream of that traffic was at last drained off. The town of Bassenger deserted to Okeechobee City. Most of the river boats moved down and engaged wherever possible on Lake Okeechobee and the drainage canals, about that time being dug. A few boats continued to operate in the portion of the river and among the upper lakes. In the late 1920's that too became unprofitable and steamboats in the Kissimmee waters almost entirely disappeared, thus ending an epoch in the Valley of the Kissimmee that had presented a romantic and colorful phases of pioneer life in Florida. The Venture, 38 foot length and 10.5 foot beam, a gasoline launch designed as a pleasure craft for fishing and sight-seeing parties, operating out of Kissimmee, is the largest boat plying the river these days.

The most noted operators of steamboats on the Kissimmee were Captain Clay Johnson, Captain Benjamin F. Hall and the Gilbert Brothers Capt. Johnson, a brother-in-law of Capt. R. E. Rose, came from New Orleans. For several years he handled transportation matters in the Disston operations and was not engaged in commercial traffic on the river as early as Capt. Hall and the Gilberts. Later Johnson and Hall became stiff competitors for the river trade. Johnson was the only operator to have three boats engaged at the same time, the





Roseada, the Osceola and the Lillie. With the last named boat he had a regular schedule between Kissimmee and Bassenger, leaving Kissimmee on Tuesdays and returning Fridays. Altogether, he had a more extended career on the river than anyone else.

Capt. Hall came down from Cincinnati with the Bertha Lee, built for the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, not long after the passage had been opened all the way from the Gulf to the Kissimmee, probably in the early part of 1884. When he reached the Kissimmee, he called on Lawrence Jennings, an authorized pilot to take the Bertha Lee unprior to Kissimmee. Jennings refused to assume responsibility for piloting so large a boat on the Kissimmee, but agreed to stand by and point out the course of the channel. The signs which the Bertha Lee made in scraping the Kissimmee banks on its way up river remained visible for several years, it is claimed. A cargo of grain was unloaded at Kissimmee and the boat was taken out. Capt. Hall then operated it on the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee River for about a year when, losing it, he returned to Kissimmee and began the operation of other boats. The Schipman probably was his first.

The three Gilbert Brothers owned and operated boats for a number of years and, perhaps more frequently than others, ran to Fort Myers. Tom Bass was the first man to operate boats on the Kissimmee. G. G. Steffee, son-in-law of Capt. Johnson, was about the last. He operated boats under and for Capt. Johnson for about 25 years ending in 1927. After traffic on the lower river ceased, he operated the Roseada between Kissimmee and, carrying supplies and passengers for the Kissimmee Island Cattle Company.





Federal Government records give only a partial listing of Kissimmee River boats and rather meager descriptions of any. For such as are not listed, official registration numbers are now wanting, and for their description, the recollections of persons who had something to do with traffic on the river have been used. Descriptive matters, not taken from official records are ordinarily given with some qualification. Being river boats, they were all built for light draft, and ranged in depth from three feet to less than one foot, to some extent in correspondence with their size. Captain Clay Johnson jocularly remarked that he could run his Roseada after a heavy dew.

The boats not shown to have been built elsewhere, were built on the water front at Kissimmee, and were constructed almost entirely of pine lumber. Passengers were no doubt carried at times on all the boats, but those known to have been designed to carry freight only are so indicated..

1. The Mary Belle, was a small freight boat, owned by Major Allen of Bassenger and piloted chiefly by Tom Bass Sr. It was probably in operation prior to 1880. The circumstances of its being sunk in the river near Bassenger have been given.

2. The Spray, 40 feet long and 10 feet beam and with a gross tonnage of 18 was owned by Arch Bass and Captain W. J. Brack. It was a sidewheeler and was probably built in 1881. When Capt. Clay Johnson arrived in the village of Kissimmee in 1883, there were but few buildings so his wife and two daughters were given sleeping quarters on this boat where it lay at the beach. After a rather short period of service, the ship's boiler was condemned and



the craft was beached at Kissimmee.

3. The Okeechobee used as a dredge tender by the Disston Land Company, was built in 1882, had cabin space for officials and employees, and had a gross tonnage of about 80.

4. The Hamilton Disston, first of that name, official number 95152, was brought from its home port, Philadelphia, where it was built in 1872, length 64.02 feet, beam 15 feet depth 6.8 feet, gross tonnage was 30.66. Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States, came from Washington to participate in an observance of the opening of the canal leading from South Port on the southern shore of Lake Tohopekaliga, and was taken to the scene as a passenger on this boat.

5. The Bertha Lee, a side wheel boat of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, official No. 3096, length 120 feet, beam 21 feet and depth of 3.8 feet, was brought down from Cincinnati by Captain Hall when he first came to Kissimmee. It was built at Portsmouth, Ohio in 1879. Official records show its gross tonnage as 121.07, Capt. Hall reached Kissimmee in 1884, and finding the boat too large for Kissimmee river service took it to the Appalachicola and Chattahoochee rivers, where, after about a year's operation, the boat sank in the Chattahoochee, through the rending of its hull by a snag. Cedar Keys is shown as its port of registration.

6. The Rosalie, a freight and passenger boat, with stern wheel, official No. 110662, gross tonnage 22.66 length 41.1 feet, beam 12.9 and depth 3.5, was built by the Disston Land Company in 1884. It was taken to Fort Myers and used as a dredge tender by Captain Minge, engaged in the Disston dredging operations on the upper Caloosahatchee.





7. The Colonist, so named because she was by the English Narcoosa Colony 1885 on East Lake Tohopekaliga, was a stern wheeler, official No. 126336; gross tonnage of 33.35, length 45.7, beam 13.7 and depth 3.5 feet; she was operated between Narcoosa and Kissimmee in ther service of this colony until the St. Cloud Sugar Belt railroad was built between those points, when it was sold to Capt. Hall operating in the Kissimmee River service.

8. The Sadie of Salem, brought from Salem, Massachusetts by the Kinsman Brothers, who engaged extensively in truck farming at South Port, was used almost entirely in their private service. It is not shown in official records, but was built about 1885. It had a gross tonnage of 22, length 60 feet and beam 12, while its depth was 6 feet, unusual for its size among boats at Kissimmee. The salt water voyage to Florida injured her boiler, which had to be recaulked at Kissimmee. Later the Sadie was taken to Tampa and converted into the tug, "The Clark."

9. The Mary Disston, a stern wheel vessel, official No. 91793, registered at Tampa, gross tonnage 71.12 length 83 feet, beam 18.5 and depth 3.8, was built at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania in 1885. It was owned and operated by the Disston Land Company in the waters of the Kissimmee and Caloosahatchee Rivers,

10. The Schipman, a small side wheel steamer, with gross tonnage length 35 feet and beam 8, built in Chicago in 1886 and brought to Kissimmee in that year. She was owned and operated by Capt. Hall.

11. The Mamie Lown, was a twin vessel of the Schipman, and its history differed only in that it was owned and operated at Kissimmee by Capt. Clay Johnson.





12. The Arbuckle, a side wheel vessel, with a gross tonnage of about 835 feet, beam 10, was built at Kissimmee 1886 and operated in those waters in freight and passenger service. The name of its original owner has not been ascertained, but when its commercial use was discontinued, it was acquired by John W. Watson, a lawyer, residing at Miami who used it for pleasure trips, hunting and fishing.

13. The Floridelpia, was a double deck, seaworthy vessel, designed for freight and passengers, gross tonnage 100 length 105 feet, beam 16 feet depth 5 feet brought from Philadelphia 1887 by the Floridelpia Land Company, who operated on the lakes south of Kissimmee. Its use there was not long continued for it was too large for the river.

14. The Cincinnati, was stern wheel vessel with open hull, official number 126599, registered at Tamp but built at Chicago in 1889, being brought to Kissimmee the following year. Its gross tonnage was 7.86 and length 34.6 feet, 9.9 beam, depth 3.4. It seems to have first been put into service at Cincinnati. At Kissimmee, it was owned by one Ritter, owner of a lumber mill at Rosalie, and used to draw barges and carry supplies. Its last owner was Capt. Clay Johnson, who eventually dismantled it, putting the machinery in his steamer, the Rose Ada, as his first boat of that name is officially listed.

15. The Reindeer, a side wheeler, official No. 110892, gross tonnage 7.21 length 32.9, 8.9 beam and depth 3.1, was built by Captain Stratford in 1890 and used primarily in his personal service between his estate on an island he owned in Lake Tohopekaliga and Kissimmee. Captain Stratford, to become a licensed pilot he gave up his English citizenship with an annual pension of about \$1700.





16. The Hamilton Disston, built by the Disston Land Company in 1890 at Kissimmee, was registered at Tampa with its official No. 96032. It had a gross tonnage of 13.53, length 48.6 feet, beam 14.2 and a depth of 3.2. A quantity of steel is said to have been used in its construction. It was used primarily to transport supplies for the company, but must have been equipped with cabins, for it is said that Thomas A. Edison, once chose to cover that portion of his journey below Kissimmee to Fort Myers, by the water route, and was being taken as a guest on the Hamilton Disston. However, that boat got stuck in the canal below South Port, and was found in that condition by the Gilbert Brothers on their "Talulah." Edison, having become weary of the delay, took passage on the Talulah back to Kissimmee and from there proceeded by rail.

17. The Octavia, a stern wheel vessel, official No. 155219, with a gross tonnage of 24 length 55, beam 14.9 and depth 2.5 feet, was built as a freight boat by the Brown Brothers at Kissimmee in 1891.

18. City of Athens, propelled by a stern wheel, official No. 126827, had a gross tonnage of 36.97, length 65 feet, 16 feet beam and depth 3.7. It was built by the Gilbert Brothers in 1891 and used in passenger and freight service between Kissimmee and Fort Myers. It was destroyed by fire at Fort Myers in 1907.

19. The Talulah, was a side wheel ship, 10 gross tons length 30 feet, beam 9 and draft 2 feet built for freight by the Gilbert Brothers at Kissimmee about 1892. It was principally operated between Kissimmee and Fort Bassenger. After some years service it was sold and used as a fishing boat.

20. The Naomi No 1, was a stern wheel boat built for Capt. Hall at Kissimmee 1892. Its gross tonnage was 10, its length 30, and beam 10 feet.





He operated it in freight and passenger service principally in the waters of the Kissimmee River.

21. The Naomi No. 2, was a larger steamer of the same type built for Capt. Hall about 1897, its gross tonnage 14, length 40 feet, its beam about 10 feet.

22. The Naomi No. 3, is the only one to appear in the official listing. It had a stern wheel, its official No. 130238, Tampa registry. Its gross tonnage was 49 length 55.4 feet, its beam 12.2 and depth 2.4. It was built in 1901, and wrecked at Fort Myers about 1906. Capt. Hall's career on the river is chiefly identified with the operation of these three boats and the Colonist which preceded them.

23. The Rose Ada, a stern wheel ship, official No. 111052, registered at Tampa, had a gross tonnage of 72, length 54.3, beam 16.3, a depth of 2 feet, and was built by Capt. Johnson in 1893. It was designed and operated to carry freight and passengers. The machinery, was taken from the Cincinnati. Its name combined the names of Capt. Johnson's two daughters, Rose and Ada.

24. The Roseada, likewise a stern vessel, official No. 111280, length 57 feet, beam 14.7 and a depth of 3.3. It drew about 16 inches. It was built by Capt. Johnson in 1899, and took the place of the earlier Rose Ada in his service. After the trade on the lower Kissimmee so nearly disappeared about 1917, this boat was operated about Lake Okeechobee until 1920, when under the management of G. G. Steffee it was taken to the upper waters and operated between Kissimmee and Kiceo in the service of the Kissimmee Island Cattle Company. The storm of 1928 wrecked the ship on the beach at Kissimmee.





25. The J. M. Kresmer, a stern wheel steamer, official No. 77159, registered at Tampa, gross tonnage 9 length 33.3, beam 13 and a depth of 2 feet, was built at Kissimmee in 1894.

26. The Lillie was Capt. Johnson's most highly prized boat. It was distinguished above all other vessels in the passenger service in Kissimmee waters, maintaining a definite schedule between Kissimmee and Bassenger. It had extensive cabin space on its upper deck, and above that a pilor house. It was a stern wheel boat, official number 141683, registered at Tampa, gross tonnage 64 length 64 feet, beam 17.5, its depth 2.8 and it drew about 18 inches. It was built by / Capt. Johnson at Kissimmee in 1900. About 1926, E. P. Dann son-in-law of Capt. Johnson acquired it and converted her into a pleasure boat operate on Biscayne Bay.

27. The Bassenger, not to be confused with the City of Bassenger, was a small freight steamer and was owned by Wm. A. Roebuck, built at Kissimmee. Its hull is said to rest in the bed of a river lagoon near Bassenger.

28. The Juanita, a side wheel boat, official No. 202071, gross tonnage 38, length 46 feet, beam 15.5 and depth 2.4, was built at Kissimmee by the Mobley Brothers in 1905. It had cabins and was well known for several years in the freight and passenger service on the river. It sank in the river at Turkey Hammock about 1910, became involved in court proceeding, through which it was acquired by Capt. Johnson, who converted it into a barge, its machinery going into the Lucy B, built about 1912, by Carl Buckles.

29. The Osceola, a side wheel freight steamer, official No. 207964, gross tonnage 87 length 74.6 feet, beam 21.1 and depth of 3.6, was built by Capt. Johnson at Kissimmee in 1910. After the river trade declined in 1916, the Osceola





was put on a run between Moorehaven and Okeechobee City, and later became a sort of tramp on the lake. When the Palm Beach Canal was being dug, the Osceola was chartered by the state and used as a dredge tender, Capt. Johnson in charge. A removed stump rolled back into the canal, and being concealed by the dark water, the hull of the Osceola when passing that point, making it a total loss.

30. The City of Bassenger, with a gross tonnage of 150 length 85 feet, beam 14, and a draft of 2 feet was a stern wheel steamer built at Kissimmee by S. A. Gilbert, in 1910, but is not shown in official listings. It carried freight and passengers between Kissimmee and Fort Myers, and was the largest boat going extended service in and out of Kissimmee. After some years of service it sank in the Caloosahatchee River, and was sold for salvage to Capt. Minge.

31. The Lucy B. had the distinction of being the last steamer built at Kissimmee, but it has no place in official listings. It was a stern wheel boat, gross tonnage 12, its length was 50 feet, beam 10, depth 3, and was built for Cal Buckles of Kissimmee about 1912, continuing in service as a steamer in freight and passenger trade for 12 years the Lucy B took care of what remained of the general traffic after the other boats had moved into the lower waters, enjoying the companionship only of the Roseada, which for a portion of that period was doing service for the Kissimmee Island Cattle Company. In its building, it received not only the machinery, but also the deck house of the Juanita, when that boat was converted into a barge. After its active service ended, the machinery was removed from the Lucy B. and a house boat was made of its hull.





*Kissimmee River*

Kissimmee, Fla.,  
June 23, 1938.

Dr. Carita Doggett Corse,  
State Director,  
Federal Writers' Project  
Jacksonville, Fla.

Dear Dr. Corse:

Replying to your favor of June 14th requesting data on Kissimmee River, I will endeavor to give such information as best I can from memory.

Coming to Florida from Georgia in 1886, I landed in the little town of Kissimmee, located on the North side of Lake Tohopekaliga which is connected by canals and lakes to the Kissimmee River, which begins at the South side of Lake Kissimmee. Because the river is so crooked, the distance to Okeechobee from Kissimmee is about 150 miles.

From 1893 to 1901, steamboating on the Kissimmee River was at its best, there being several light draft stern wheel boats operating at that time in various lines of business. There were three big land companies operating in Kissimmee, - building steamboats, dredges and barges, and cutting canals to connect the waterway from Kissimmee to the Kissimmee River. There were five boats on a regular run, hauling general merchandise from Kissimmee as far South as Ft. Bassinger, which was the main distributing point.

Special trips to Ft. Myers by the "Bassinger" and "City of Athens" carried passengers. Abundance of wild deer, alligators, fish and birds of all kinds were taken on these trips.

The following five boats were built in Kissimmee and operated by their owners:- "City of Athens" and the "Bassinger" by Gelbert Brothers, namely, Edward A., Samuel A., James R. and Addison S. Gilbert; the "Lillie" and "Roseada" by Capt. Clay Johnson; and the "Naomi" by Capt. B. F. Hall.

In addition to these boats, there were other boats doing various kinds of work. After railroads and truck lines were in operation throughout the Kissimmee Valley, business turned in this direction and the steamboat business was discontinued.

Trusting this will be of some assistance to you in your work,

Very truly yours,

A. S. Gilbert



Federal Writers' Project  
American Guide  
Orlando, Florida

Orlando Project  
Complete  
880 words

February 15, 1937

Class III B

PAST AND PRESENT ACTIVITIES ON THE KISSIMMEE RIVER

Consultants: Mrs. George Steffee, of Kissimmee, daughter of Captain J. Johnson, pioneer ship builder and Kissimmee River boat captain, and wife of Captain George Steffee, Kissimmee River boat captain.

A. M. (Casey) Jones, for 26 years a resident of Kissimmee and sport fisherman of the Kissimmee River.

E. F. Hyatt, owner of the Fort Gatlin Hotel, Orlando, who recently took a week's fishing trip down the Kissimmee River.

The Kissimmee River System offers excellent large mouth black bass fishing but its present unnavigable condition for all craft except rowboats holds it in an obscurity which gives no inkling of the river traffic for which it once was celebrated. While most of the waterway is passable for boats drawing up to 24 inches, sand bars in the lower part of the four mile Southport Canal, between Lakes Tohopekaliga and Cypress, barely will give passage to a 16 foot rowboat. There are many suitable camping places along the route but none have drinking water. The fisherman must take everything along that he will need on his trip as the scattered population of





Crackers and a few Negroes in this river country can offer no assistance or supplies and can give little information as many never have been five miles away from their homes. Navigation of the tortuous river course only can be accomplished with a guide as the great maze of estuaries, side channels, and swamps would get anyone lost who was not familiar with the country.

Large mouth black bass are plentiful in the river channel and catfish abound in the lakes. Wooden plugs, "River Runt", "Top Water 2,000", or "Underwater Pike", are used for the bass by sport fishermen. Catfish attract commercial fishers who seine them to supply markets in Kissimmee and Lake Wales. Rowboats are of necessity the transportation means for both types of fishermen.

While the quantity of fish has been reduced by lowering the lake level and seining there is still a sufficient number to make catching 10 three-to-four-pound bass in 15 minutes a common occurrence. Parties of sport fishermen make overnight camps at Hatchinaw Canal, Nigger Ridge, a point north of the old headquarters of the Consolidated Lumber Company, and at Pierce Bridge. All of these spots are as remote from civilization in appearance as the African Veldt. The few Crackers who live along the river exist by trapping and fishing. Turpentine camps, back from the water, give no clue to their existence except when a truant Negro laborer comes to fish. Several fishing camps and a small store, 20 miles north of Lake Okeechobee,



are the only other signs of human activity.

The river flows into a channel from 30 to 50 feet wide and is deep enough for craft drawing 24 inches of water, except at the Lake Cypress end of the Southport Canal, where the depth is barely 12 inches. No attempt to keep this channel clear has been made since the river steamers suspended operation in 1924. However, a Kissimmee Yacht club has been organized as a member of the Florida Inland Waterways Congress and is working for the creation of a four foot channel from Kissimmee to Okeechobee.

Commercial fishing is carried on chiefly at the south end of Lake Kissimmee. In addition to catfish the men also catch frogs which are sold in Lake Wales and Kissimmee. Most of the fishermen live in or near the city in which they market their catch.

Bluff Hammock, Alligator Bluff, Turkey Hammock, are River Settlement names and each contains about one Cracker family. These people are friendly, ignorant, and usually more dead than alive from improper diet. Kico, a former settlement created by the Kissimmee Island Cattle Company, is occupied only by a caretaker.

In 1883 Captain J. Johnson brought his family from Louisiana to work with E. R. Rose who was dredging the Kissimmee River to make it navigable. Kissimmee was little more than a





trading post and as many Indians as Whites were seen. The south end of the railroad tracks was at Broadway Avenue. All the buildings were of logs except one frame home and the "Tropical", a hotel built by Captain Johnson's brother-in-law, Mr. Mabbett, for whom Mabbett Street is named.

The first power boat on the river, the "Hamilton Disston", had been commanded by Captain Grogan. Captain Johnson built Kissimmee's second frame house, planted trees, and became the first ship builder. His first boat, the "Lillie", a sixty footer, was an oil burner, for which he had to haul crude oil from Sanford. His others, "Osceola" and "Koscada" were wood burners.

The river business picked up as more people came to the South Peninsula country. Cattle raising, agriculture, and building increased. Oranges and hides were brought up to Kissimmee and grain was taken south. Boats were loaded by driving wagons into the water alongside them, until a large dock was built near Captain's Johnson's home which attracted boats from far and near. Once the "Floridelphia" came from the Mississippi River. Captains Roebuck, Hall, Gilbert, Grogan, Steffee, and Johnson commanded boats, some of which went as far as Fort Myers. Fishing and pleasure excursions were planned, especially during the winter months. A two day trip to Fort Bassenger was scheduled, leaving Kissimmee Tuesdays and returning on Fridays.

Activity on the river was in a decline by 1908 as



railroads took away much of the business. The "Lillie" was wrecked by hitting a stump in the channel. Another boat and the large dock were demolished completely during a tropical storm. River traffic had ended by 1925 and the channel was abandoned.





FLORIDA MERCHANT MARINE SURVEY

Miami, Florida Office

C O P Y

VII. k.

EARLY STEAMBOATS ON THE HALIFAX AND INDIAN  
RIVERS

1895.

The steamship "J. W. Sweeney" stern-wheel flat bottom (Mississippi Type) made regular runs between Ormond and Fort Pierce in 1895. Murray Lourcey was captain and she carried both passengers and freight. The principal item was oranges.

There were two decks on this boat and besides the Captain and Mate, there were two engineers, two firemen and four deck hands.

Occasionally this boat would go around and at one time it was three days before she was removed. The tonnage of these boats varied, but some carried a tonnage of 500 tons. Titusville was the headquarters for steamers of this type.

Another boat that made regular trips on the river was the "Santa Lucia" with Captain Bowie in charge. This steamer was of the stern-wheel type and its southern destination was Jupiter. This was about the year 1898 to 1900. A few years later, this boat was reported lost at sea during a hurricane, with captain Bravo in command and his brother as chief engineer.



### EARLY STEAMERS ON THE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA

The steamer "Athlete" was another vessel that served New Smyrna with freight and carried passengers. In the year 1884 the Athlete loaded with a full assignment of Lime and a cargo of Dry Goods and Provisions with Captain Fozzard in command came through the Inlet and soon after landing at the Town Docks his vessel caught on fire and the captain ordered the boxes of dry goods and provisions to be thrown overboard, and it is said that part of this freight was recovered, but the vessel was a complete loss and only a few years ago, the wreckage of this old vessel could be seen imbedded in the sands at the exact spot where she burned.





## EARLY VESSELS ON THE EAST COAST

The steamer "Greenwich" made regular trips (weekly) between Jacksonville and New Smyrna in the year 1883. It would dock opposite the store and post office known as the Fox place and the dock was owned by E. K. Lowd. Captain Fulford was in command of the Greenwich and she carried a crew of twelve. There were two decks, fitted up with staterooms for the convenience of passengers.

This transportation service was a great convenience to the people who resided here at that time. The town of Enterprise served this section with mail, and J. T. Detwiler one of the pioneer citizens carried the mail from Enterprise to New Smyrna making the route three times per week.



## EARLY STEAMBOATS ON THE EAST COAST OF FLORIDA

1885 -- 1890

### ST. AUGUSTINE

This steamer was another of the stern-wheeler type of boat that made regular trips on the inland water route between Ormond and Fort Pierce from 1885-1890 with Captain R. S. Sheldon in command. She was equipped to carry passengers as well as freight.

The "UNO" was a later type of steamer with a screw-propeller, and Captain Ketchell was in command. Also the CLARA and INO were of the same type of class as the UNO.





Federal Writers' Projects  
American Guide  
Jacksonville, Florida  
August 11, 1936

Margaret Barnes  
Sanford, Florida

### Neighboring Waterways in Lake and Orange Counties

Crossing the Seminole County line into Orange County, we find no navigable waterways; the Big and Little Econlockhatchee flow through the county, rivers in time of flood, but tiny streams during normal times. But Orange County has truly been said to be mostly water with a little land thrown in for good measure, having a water area of 55,563 acres out of a total area of 594,560. In the city of Orlando alone there are thirty-five lakes wholly or partly within the city limits, and seven hundred, thirty-seven in Orange County. The lakes are mostly clear, spring fed waters and make lovely home sites and swimming places. The lakes in and around Winter Park, Lakes Sue, Virginia, Osceola, Mezell, Maitland, Howell and Jessup, are connected by canals navigable for small, outboard motor boats and canoes. The trip through these canals is beautiful and romantic, to which the students at Rollins College can bear evidence.

Orange County also contains several fine sulphur springs. Wekiva Springs, for many years known as Clay Springs, is on the line between Seminole and Orange Counties. The water is clear and the flow is sufficient to form the Wekiva River, with the aid of several other springs, of which we gave a description in our Seminole County waterways. There are some wonderful sink-holes



around Wekiva Springs, and the inhabitants in that vicinity declare that new ones appear now and then. Wekiva is the favorite swimming place for Orange County citizens and a famous fishing ground.

A few miles to the northwest of Wekiva Springs lies Kelly Park. Rock Springs is the central point of interest in Kelly Park. This park was named for Dr. Howard A. Kelly, famous surgeon of Baltimore, Maryland. He gave this tract comprising 202 acres of land to Orange County as a perpetual recreational park for all its citizens, and as a game and fish preserve for all time. Pavilions, a caretaker's log cabin home, bathing pool, bath houses, trails and other accommodations have been provided. The park is constantly used by picnic parties, and by visitors interested in its geology, its plant and animal life, and its natural restful beauty.

Twenty-six thousand gallons of water per minute flow from out a gigantic wall of coquina rock. The stream winds through Kelly Park in a very crooked course and empties into the Wekiva River.

The owner of this property before the War Between the States was Mr. W. S. Delke, who was the first settler on this place. Most of the land near the spring, 100 acres, which is now grown up in tall pine and oak trees, was planted to cotton, corn, rice, sugar cane, and oranges. Deer were a great nuisance to the vegetable garden.

One of the old slaves, "Uncle Joe" Roberts, who was born on this plantation, is living at Mount Dora. He was taken to Rock Springs by Dr. Kelly in 1927 and pointed out the locations of the





buildings and fields of the earlier days. There was a dam across the run about 50 yards from the spring. The confined water was used to run the machinery of a grist mill, saw mill, and cotton gin; the owner's home was on the hill to the north of the spring, and the negro cabins to the south. Uncle Joe said that the main stream used to come from the northern opening which at this time has no flow.

Back over the line in Seminole County there are three small towns that should be of interest. Going south on the Dixie Highway (the old Orlando Road), we come to Longwood, ten miles south of Sanford and eleven miles north of Orlando, in what is known as the ridge section. Mr. E. W. Henck homesteaded here in 1873 and was still active in business until a few years ago. To him is due much of Longwood's progress and prosperity. He is said to have been one of Lincoln's body guard, and to have induced the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad to include Longwood in its line of march. The post office was established in 1874, and Mr. Henck named it after a Massachusetts town of the same name. Mr. Henck was himself postmaster for many years when the Republican party was in power.

The Atlantic Coast Line makes Longwood accessible by rail to all parts of the state, just as the Dixie Highway makes it accessible by moter. In Longwood there is a postoffice, telegraph office, saw mill and lumber yard, crate factory, and up to date stores of all kinds; it boast a public library, Woman's Civic League, Masonic Lodge, two churches, and a very comfortable hotel where the cost of living for a week, month, or season will not detract from the enjoyment of one's vacation.





Longwood is nationally known as the poultry center of the state. The exhibitors from Longwood have not only won the coveted blue ribbon but the sweepstakes as well, at many of the big shows throughout America. The town is located in a section where farming can be specialized in, and where the land is suited to the highest culture of citrus fruits and berries, including the delicate tropical banana. It is surrounded by clear, fresh-water lakes, being also near Lake Jessup and the Wekiva River, affording wonderful fishing for the lovers of this sport.

A splendid new school, the Lyman School, situated midway between Longwood and Altamont, on the Dixie Highway, modernly equipped accommodates the children of that region, which includes Longwood, Altamont Springs, and Forest City.

Altamont Springs is located very conveniently on the Dixie Highway and on the main line of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, in the southern end of the county (Seminole) and twelve miles from Sanford. Altamont is surrounded with some of the finest orange groves in the State and is peculiarly adapted to fruit growing and trucking. Here too and located some of the largest ferneries in the country. The springs here supply the town with an abundance of pure water and there are eight beautiful lakes within the town limits. Altamont Springs is a place one likes to linger in; there is a fine tourist hotel here and there is a free golf course and boats for fishermen.

Forest City is located in the southwestern part of the county. Its industries are stock raising, farming, fruit growing, poultry,





and livestock, all of which do well here.

On the Lake County side of the Wekiva River, we find one very large lake. Lake Apopka is partly in Orange and partly in Lake county. Serving the Lake Apopka region is a system of canals making it possible to go to Jacksonville by water. Via canal, one may go in small boats through Lakes Apopka, Beauclair, Dora, Eustis, Griffin, on down Haines Creek, into another Canal and then into the St. Johns River. - There are also many small lakes in this county, some of them spring fed and some fresh water, both kinds being good for fishing.



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FLORIDA MERCHANT MARINE SURVEY

Miami, Florida Office

C O P Y

III.b.

May 28, 1938

H. L. Long, State Director

Miami, Florida.

Dear Sir:

Reporting on Chapter III Early Types of boats in Fla.

One early type was - boats on the "Pioneer Line" -  
one named the steamer "Volusia" Master - T. W. Lund.

Would leave Jacksonville every Saturday afternoon at  
three o'clock - leave Sanford every Monday morning  
seven o'clock arriving Salt Lake Tuesday morning -  
connecting with Mallory's line and Steamer St. Johns  
for New York. John Clark Agent - Jacksonville. Carried  
freight.

There are several other steamers such as the steamer  
Fox that hauled oranges and took passengers stopping  
at Rockledge.

Enterprise is another steamboat used for freight -  
Captain Sutton. He opened a boarding house here in  
Titusville in the Fox house.

The Wekiwa is another passenger and freight boat purchased  
from Capt. W. Jones to run from Enterprise and Sanford to  
Salt Lake.



"Ina of Lake Worth" - launched by Mr. H. F. Hammon - Feb. 1881. Measures 45½ feet long - 11½ ft. beam capacity 15 tons - draws 2 ft when loaded. Periangier rigged - Intended for carrying trade between Fort Worth and Titusville Fla. Completely decked over - two hatch ways and a cabin 11 by 9 ft. A fast & excellent sea boat Model - New Haven Sharpie - Wm. Lanchart builder. Important in vegetable trade.

One of the early boats traveling on the Indian river was the Schooner "A. L. Fitch" of Bristol Me. (57 tons) bound for New Smyrna was wrecked two miles south of Mosquito Inlet during the gale on the night of Feb. 2d 1881. Vessel total loss. Cargo consisting of 10 bbls. of flour - 100 bushels corn for R. S. Sheldon and coal for Str. Gleam then in port - was partially saved.

Trading Sloop "Bon Ton" - Captain Will Moore - sailed on the Indian river.

Ina - Schooner - H. F. Hammon - master from Lake Worth - trades here in Titusville.

Osceola - Schooner - Captain M. O. Burnham - Keeper in 1881 of the Canaveral Light - stopped in Titusville

Steamer Florence - owned by Fred'k DeBarry.

Foam - Capt. Burnham in 1881 sold his sloop to Mr. Sheldon of New Smyra.

Agnes - early trading sloop - Captain McLean - trips on the Indian River - carries a supply of Groceries, provisions,





dry goods, boots, shoes, hats, clothing & notions for cash  
only. 1881.

Ending report

G. R. Jacobsen

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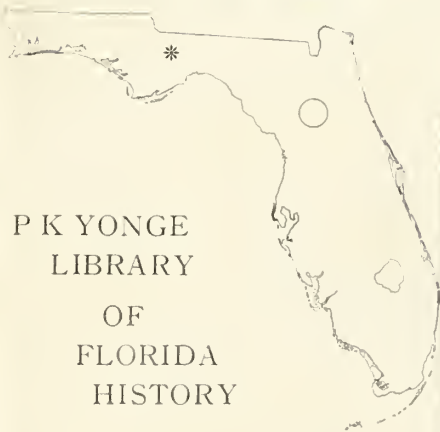








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